I: Washington S-4 (no date) 1956 AF13 Northwest China AF13.

the early thirties (see particularly: Tai Chi-t'ao, Hsi-pei. Nanking 1931), this part of China attracted growing attention as one of the greatest hopes for her future. To be sure, the provinces covered by the concept have not always been the same in the series of surveys engendered by this movement; particularly, the province of Suiyuan, now part of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, has been frequently included. (For a discussion of the question of geographical extent see: Wang Chin-fu, Hsi-pei chih ti-wen yü jen-wen. Shanghai 1935, and Ch'en Cheng-hsiang, Hsi-pei ch'ü-yü ti-li. Chungking 1945) A more sober approach has however already then identified the Northwest geographically in the manner of the present handbook: it was meant to include what were then the provinces of Shensi, Kansu, Chinghai, Ninghsia, and Sinkiang. (see Hsü Hsü, Hsi-pei chien-she lun. Shanghai 1944)

This more or less generally accepted definition of the geographical area has set a challenging but highly difficult task for the compilers of the present handbook. The degree of diversity within the region, which includes the cradle of Chinese civilization as well as the most remote outpost of the Chinese colonial empire, called for a breadth of coverage which at times tended to strain the unity of presentation to the bursting point. The fact, on the other hand, that the region has been considered a unit by observers as well as inhabitants, necessitated analyzing interrelationships of the different segments of Northwestern society. Every possible type of relation in every field of human life presented itself here as if in a test-tube. What could be done within the framework of this handbook is again only a beginning. If pursued, this analysis could lead to a typology of group relations.

The present compilation owes much to the spirit of teamwork which prevailed in our handbook project. This team included the contributors to the other handbooks. All the names mentioned on the title-pages and in the prefaces of the General Handbook and the other Regional Handbooks deserved to be repeated here. Editorial work on most of the sociological and political sections was done by Beatrice Miller, and on all the economic sections by Dorothy Schroeter. Charts and tables were designed by Florence Cochran.

October 1956 Hellmut Wilhelm

121 183 custom is "the customary way of doing things." Specifically, custom is an established norm practiced and repeated by a multitude of generations. It is closely associated with folkways and mores, but it designates the traditional, autonomic, mass character of both.

121 181 Social values are defined as modes of conduct regarded as matters of common welfare by an effective consensus of the group; they are such matters as prove to be meaningful, systematic ideas, and become effectively invested principles which guide behavior. Above all, they are matters of convention invested with effect and meaning for all participants.

It should be pointed out that any value is a preference. We must bear in mind that cultural standardization defines and limits choices, and duration of values depends upon the prestige of values it carries.

II. The Region and the People

121 • 128 Prior to the discussion of the region and the people, it is necessary to call attention to the fact that the general discussion of this section and the following section cover only the pre-Republican period and the period of the Chinese Nationalist administration on the mainland of China. Knowledge of social change in this region under Communist control is lacking, and there is no reliable information pertaining to the true picture of living conditions there. According to Communist propaganda * [668] there have been tremendous improvements in every aspect of the people's livelihood. These "improvements," however, do not necessarily bring about a basic change in habits, social customs or traditions. No conclusions can be ventured here.

121 * 563 In the Northwest region of China one finds Han Chinese, Chinese Moslems, Turks, Mongols and Tibetans. People of different races, though living under identical geographical conditions, each group constructs its homes on the traditional pattern handed down by its ancestors. Each retains much of the old family traditions. The altered conditions called for by circumstances are mostly superficial.

For centuries the people in this area have been largely nomadic, i.e., the Mongols and Tibetans. Their life is simple and mobile; the tribesmen cling to tent living. Those who mix with [199] the Han Chinese have assimilated some aspects of Chinese culture. For the most part the Han Chinese of the area are poor farmers or traveling merchants who carry on caravan trade. The Chinese Moslems in Chinghai and Sinkiang may be nomadic or sedentary; they cultivate land where the soil is fit for farming, or they move with the seasons to pasture for their animals. In Shensi, Kansu and Ninghsia, the Moslems who live among the

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HEALTH AND SANITATION

I. Introduction

For the purposes of this section the region has been divided into three groups: (1) the Turkic people of Sinkiang (including the Eastern Turks, Kirghiz and Kazakhs), (2) the Tibetans of Chinghai and (3) the Chinese of the Northwest (including both Hans and Moslems).

Measured by Western standards, the area as a whole lacks most modern facilities for maintaining high standards of health and sanitation. The shortage of trained personnel in the fields of medicine, dentistry and nursing is quite acute. These conditions may be due partly to the geographical location of the area, being in the deep hinterland, away from the center of China, and generally lacking a sufficient water supply. The common man's ignorance of the basic facts of health and sanitation contributes greatly to the spread of disease and to the lack of precautionary measures against the occurrence of certain diseases.

However, the local population, while living under what we consider unsanitary conditions, has built immunities to many diseases, to which a Westerner, living under the same conditions, would easily succumb. Some habits that we consider dangerous in spreading disease may actually be without any harmful consequences to the local people.

II. The Turkic Peoples of Sinkiang

A. The Diet of the Turkic People

The daily diet of the sedentary Eastern Turkis consists mostly of mutton and rice, with vegetables, both boiled and fried, including onions, potatoes, turnips, carrots and spinach, many forms of soups, and pilaus. Tea is the staple beverage, served with sugar and without milk. Bread, in the shape of circular rolls indented at the top, constitutes an important item in the diet. A variety of fruits, including melons, apples, pears, apricots, peaches, nectarines, pomegranates, plums, cherries, and mulberries, grow in profusion in Turkestan and are abundant during the summer.

The common people eat only twice during the day; in the morning and in the evening. The wealthy people frequently have feasts and eat a great abundance and variety of foods. Many of them suffer from abnormal obesity as a result of overeating and lack of exercise. A common proverb in Sinkiang warning against the folly of this type of behavior is the following, "He who eats sparingly eats ten times, but he who eats too much eats but once."

The diet of the Kirghiz and the Kazakhs, the nomadic Turks, differs somewhat from that of the sedentary Eastern Turks. Their diet is composed mainly of milk and mutton. From flour and

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/Chinese, Chinese Moslems and Sedentary Tibetans/ the Chinese in the Northwest meets with several obstacles. The one most difficult to overcome is the lack of attitudinal uniformity due to a multitude of historical, environmental and social factors which have molded the people's behavior in the Northwest. There is, to begin with, the difference between the urban and the rural situation, which even though prevalent all over China, has made for a specially pronounced diversity in the Northwest. Generally speaking, in centers like Sian or Lanchou attitudes are met with which do not differ too much from those prevalent in other cities of China. It has to be taken into account, though, that Sian has been the capital of the Chinese Empire for centuries up to about one thousand years ago, and this fact still shapes certain attitudes of the citizens of Sian today. Lanchou, on the other hand, is most definitely a frontier city, the last major outpost of Chinese civilization with an ostentatious pride in local traditions and relics of a cultural or esthetic nature, but open, on the other hand, to a colorful mixture of influences coming from a variety of peoples beyond the pale. The urban attitudes prevalent in Sian and Lanchou thus differ perceptively and both cities differ in certain respects from other Chinese metropolises. Their peculiarities influence in turn urban-rural and social tensions in a specific way.

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The Chinese rural scene, on the other hand, displays a variety of factors accounting for attitudinal diversity. There are the differences of the loess-cave dwellers and the mud-hut dwellers, those of the irrigational farmer and the one on hills or mountain slopes; there are regions of compact minorities or dominant majorities of Moslems and finally, regions along the few great thoroughfares and regions of remote seclusion.

The picture gains in complexity in the real frontier areas, Western Kansu, Chinghai and Sinkiang, where the Chinese constitute a minority. Here the diversity of peoples with whom the Chinese have contact, the geographical differences, the professional differences, differences of the duration of stay, of the home province of the settlers account for attitudinal patterns which change from settlement to settlement.

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What is attempted in the following pages is, in view of the difficulties, and furthermore, in view of the pitifully scanty coverage of the area in the literature, to present a few samples of pertinent observations, which might add up to some general notions. In the selection, stress has been laid on the frontier regions, as the regions within the pale, reference still can be made to the General Handbook.

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In their book, The Gobi Desert (New York, 1944), Mildred Cable and Francesca French describe the Chinese people's life in the fortress of Chia-yu-kuan in Western Kansu, which they visited in the thirties: "Inside of the fortress, life was divided into three distinct sections, each of which had an existence quite